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Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request contained in the statement of the President of the Security Council dated 25 November 2013 (S/PRST/2013/18), in which the Council requested me to keep it informed about the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the progress in the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (see S/2012/481, annex). It provides an assessment of the major political and security trends in the Central African subregion since my last report dated 14 November 2013 (S/2013/671), offers an update on progress in the implementation of the UNOCA mandate and reports on ongoing efforts to counter the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army.

II. Major developments in the Central African subregion

2. Since the issuance of my previous report, the Central African subregion continues to be dominated by the deterioration of the overall situation in the Central African Republic and its growing regional impact, the expansion of the activities of Boko Haram beyond the territory of Nigeria into some countries in the subregion, the threat of terrorism and continuing concerns regarding maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the illegal wildlife trade and transnational organized crime. Combined, these challenges have had a negative impact on the humanitarian situation in the subregion.

A. Political and socioeconomic developments

3. During the reporting period, Central African States individually, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) remained fully engaged and involved in the search for solutions to the complex crisis in the Central African Republic. The situation in the Central African Republic was also discussed at the thirty-seventh

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ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held from 19 to 23 December 2013 in N'Djamena.

4. At the political level, Chad, as chair of ECCAS, convened on 9 and 10 January 2014 the sixth extraordinary summit of ECCAS, devoted to the situation in the Central African Republic. This summit led to the resignation of the Head of State of the Transition, Michel Djotodia, and of the Prime Minister, Nicolas Tiangaye, on 10 January 2014. Shortly thereafter, the National Transitional Council elected Catherine Samba-Panza as the new Head of State of the Transition and a new Prime Minister, Andre Nzapayeké, was subsequently appointed.

5. During the reporting period, calm and peaceful municipal and departmental elections took place in Gabon on 14 December 2013, resulting in a landslide win for the ruling Parti démocratique gabonais. On 24 January 2014, President Ali Bongo Ondimba appointed Daniel Ona Ondo, a member of the Parti démocratique gabonais, as the new Prime Minister and Head of Government in replacement of Raymond Ndong Sima.

6. In Chad, the cabinet of Prime Minister Kalzeubé Payimi Deubet was reshuffled for the fourth time since his appointment in November 2013. The last cabinet reshuffle took place in February 2014. The Government was reduced from 42 members to 27 (21 Ministers and 6 State Secretaries) and some departments were merged with others. It was the most significant reduction in number in more than 10 years.

7. In Sao Tome and Principe, tensions arose on 12 February following the refusal of the presidential guard to report to duty upon the return of President Manuel Pinto Da Costa from official travel. The resignation of the Chief of Defence Staff on 13 February triggered rumours of a possible destabilization plot. The tensions were subsequently diffused, following discussions initiated by the Government and the Prime Minister. The country is expected to hold legislative elections later in 2014.

8. The application by Equatorial Guinea for membership in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries was accepted on 20 February after it announced a moratorium on the death penalty. The decision on Equatorial Guinea's membership in the Community will be formalized at the Summit of Heads of State and Government in East Timor in July 2014.

9. Efforts towards regional integration and free movement within the CEMAC region saw a new development on 8 November 2013, when Equatorial Guinea reconsidered its decision not to implement the planned free movement of people in the region as at 1 January 2014, despite a previous decision by CEMAC Heads of State in June 2013. Equatorial Guinea had cited concerns that the visa-free travel regime would threaten employment opportunities for its citizens. Gabon similarly reconsidered its decision. The other four countries in the CEMAC zone (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad and the Republic of the Congo) have proceeded with putting in place visa-free arrangements for their nationals. On 12 March, following discussions between the Chairperson of CEMAC, President Ali Bongo Ondimba, and the President of the CEMAC Commission, Pierre Moussa, it was decided to relocate CEMAC headquarters from Bangui to Libreville, given the ongoing security situation in the Central African Republic.

10. According to data provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Central African economies grew by 4.3 per cent in 2013,

reflecting a 1.3 per cent decrease from the 2012 growth rate. The decline is attributable to a decrease in oil production and stagnation in the region's agricultural sector. The economies of Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe expanded, while the economies of Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo contracted. Negative growth was experienced in the Central African Republic (-14.5 per cent versus 3.9 per cent) and Equatorial Guinea (-12.1 per cent versus 9.5 per cent). In 2014, Central African economies are expected to grow by 6.7 per cent, driven largely by robust demand for petroleum in world markets. However, the persistence of the sociopolitical crisis in the Central African Republic and security concerns in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are factors that may unfavourably affect the subregion's overall economic outlook.

B. Security developments

11. The security situation in the Central African subregion continued to be affected by the ongoing crisis in the Central African Republic. Furthermore, developments in the Sahel-Sahara region, particularly in north-eastern Nigeria and in Libya, as well as in the Gulf of Guinea, continued to be of concern, given their potential impact on the stability of Central African States. During the reporting period, numerous initiatives were launched at the subregional and bilateral levels to strengthen cooperation and coordination on border control in order to address the increasing threats posed by terrorism and trafficking.

12. In the Central African Republic, the security situation continued to deteriorate, with growing security implications for neighbouring countries. Subsequent to decisions of the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) took over from the ECCAS-led Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic on 19 December 2013. Burundi, Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda deployed forces within MISCA during the period under review, while Chad withdrew, on 13 April 2014, its 850 soldiers.

13. During the period under review, Boko Haram expanded its activities beyond north-eastern Nigeria into some countries in the Central African subregion. Boko Haram is suspected to have carried out three coordinated attacks near the Nigeria-Cameroon border and is also believed to be responsible for the kidnapping on 5 April of two Italian priests and a Canadian nun in northern Cameroon. On 13 April, Cameroonian security forces shot and killed three suspected Boko Haram militants in Amchide near the Nigerian border. On the same day, two security officers at a Cameroonian checkpoint were wounded.

14. The growing regional impact of Boko Haram's activities as well as the rising threat posed by terrorism and illicit activities in Central Africa have sparked a renewed interest in strengthened bilateral and subregional agreements to address the security threats posed by terrorism. On 17 and 18 March, defence and military chiefs from the six-member Lake Chad Basin Commission (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Niger and Nigeria) met in Cameroon and agreed to establish the Multinational Joint Task Force, empowered to act against militant threats. Furthermore, on 26 March, the Nigeria Customs Service and representatives of Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger held an emergency meeting in Abuja, aimed at

establishing a joint border patrol platform against the increasing threat of insurgency, terrorism and illicit trade in small arms. Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad have also strengthened cooperation at the bilateral level to ensure better border control coordination. On 9 April, the Nigerian army announced that troops of the Joint Task Force patrolling the Lake Chad Basin had foiled an attempt by suspected terrorists to attack communities in the area and that arms and ammunition left behind by fleeing terrorists had been recovered.

15. The situation in the Sahel-Sahara region continued to be of concern to the subregion. Porous borders and weak State structures throughout the Sahel region, compounded by specific challenges in Libya and Mali, provide an enabling environment for increased illicit activities and potential instability in the Central African subregion. On 16 February, the Heads of State of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger established, in Nouakchott, the Sahel G5, which aims to strengthen coordination among Sahel States on issues related to infrastructure, development and security.

16. Piracy, armed robbery at sea, organized crime as well as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Gulf of Guinea region continue to constitute a threat to the peace, security and socioeconomic development of both coastal and landlocked States in the Central and West African subregions. The Gulf of Guinea has now become the region of Africa most affected by piracy and armed robbery at sea. The cost of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea owing to stolen goods, security and insurance is estimated at approximately $2 billion. During the reporting period, the Global Integrated Shipping Information System of the International Maritime Organization recorded 17 cases of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, of which 30 per cent occurred off the coast of the Republic of the Congo. Since the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, held in Yaoundé in June 2013, progress has been achieved in the establishment of the Interregional Coordination Centre, with the development of a 2014-2016 action plan.

17. Poaching remained a major concern for several Governments in Central Africa. On 13 December, ECCAS signed agreements with six agencies for the implementation of anti-poaching activities: the German Agency for International Cooperation, Gabon's National Parks Agency, the World Wildlife Foundation, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Conservation Justice and the Aspinall Foundation. President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon and President Idriss Déby Itno of Chad attended the Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade, held on 13 February in London. Together with the leaders of Botswana and the United Republic of Tanzania, Presidents Bongo and Déby Itno pledged, at that meeting, to honour a 10-year moratorium on the sale of their ivory stockpiles in an effort to protect elephants. On the same occasion, Central African leaders, along with the other participating African Heads of State and government officials, issued a declaration renewing their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the relevant resolutions and decisions pertaining to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and to eradicate the market for illegal wildlife products, strengthen the relevant legal frameworks and support the development of sustainable livelihoods for communities affected by the illegal wildlife trade.

C. Humanitarian and human rights developments

18. During the period under review, the humanitarian and human rights situation in the subregion remained of concern, owing in large part to the inter-communal violence and continued absence of State authority in the Central African Republic and the resulting regional impact. Numerous human rights abuses, such as violence against women, including rape, by rebels and other combatants in the Central African Republic were documented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in February 2014.

19. Following the 5 and 6 December 2013 attack of the "anti-balaka" on ex-Séléka positions in Bangui, the security situation in the Central African Republic deteriorated dramatically and was marked by an escalation of inter-communal violence, sparking renewed displacement of people. The targeting of the Muslim population by anti-balaka militia and their sympathizers resulted in thousands of persons fleeing from the Central African Republic, dramatically increasing the impact of the crisis on neighbouring countries. As at 30 April 2014, more than 346,000 Central Africans had fled to neighbouring countries, almost 100,000 of them since December 2013. It is estimated that more than 1 million people have been displaced both internally and outside the country.

20. Governments and United Nations agencies in the subregion continue to struggle to manage the regional humanitarian, social, economic and security consequences of this crisis, with very limited means and resources. As a result of the deteriorating situation, Chad and Cameroon facilitated the repatriation of an estimated 110,000 of their nationals, while other countries requested assistance from international agencies to repatriate theirs.

21. Activities of Boko Haram have also resulted in adverse humanitarian implications for Central Africa, in particular Cameroon and Chad. The fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram has driven an estimated 57,000 Nigerian refugees and returning immigrants into Cameroon, Chad and Niger, with suspected insurgents among them, and worsened an already dire humanitarian situation in those countries. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its operational partners are engaged in the registration and relocation of refugees away from the border area as stipulated under international refugee law.

22. In Cameroon, a presidential decree issued on 18 February, led to the freeing of a large number of Cameroonian prisoners, including a few high-profile individuals who had been convicted on charges of corruption. On 31 March, however, the unprecedented arrest of a serving minister was made, on charges of embezzlement. The arrest warrant was withdrawn shortly thereafter and he was released the following day.

23. The Republic of the Congo announced that it had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the instruments for which were signed in February 2014. It is the second CEMAC Member State to ratify the Convention, after Gabon in 2008. The Republic of the Congo also advanced the implementation of a law on the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, adopted in February 2011.

III. Activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

A. Supporting Member States and subregional organizations

24. During the period under review, UNOCA remained engaged with key stakeholders to help to prevent violent conflict and promote regional peace and security. In line with its mandate, the Office continued to shepherd thematic activities in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

25. My Special Representative continued to hold regular consultations with the Secretary-General of ECCAS on issues of common interest and senior officials of ECCAS and UNOCA continued to meet on a regular basis at the political and technical levels.

26. On 2 December, ECCAS participated in the annual briefing by UNOCA to the diplomatic community in Gabon. During the event, and for the first time, ECCAS briefed the Ambassadors and representatives of international organizations on cooperation between ECCAS and the African Union, in particular with regard to the transition from the peace operation of the ECCAS-led Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic to MISCA.

27. UNOCA participated in three workshops organized by ECCAS on cross-border criminality and cooperation between February and April in Burundi, the Republic of the Congo and Cameroon. A major outcome of those meetings was the identification of main obstacles to development and regional integration resulting from cross-border criminality. A number of practical measures to address related challenges were also adopted. UNOCA also continued its fruitful cooperation with ECCAS in order to operationalize the decisions taken during the June 2013 Yaoundé summit on tackling maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. UNOCA also facilitated the effective participation of ECCAS in these missions as well as in the thirty-seventh ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

28. Consultations in Libreville were held with CEMAC officials and with Equatorial Guinea on the subject of greater regional integration among the six CEMAC Member States (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon). Given the challenges encountered in the effective implementation of the visa-free travel regime, originally planned for 1 January 2014, UNOCA and CEMAC officials initiated discussions on joint activities to encourage the smooth and speedy implementation of the envisioned visa-free travel regime (see para. 9 above).

29. My Special Representative undertook missions to Chad, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to assess first hand the humanitarian and security consequences of the crisis in the Central African Republic for those neighbouring countries, as well as the social, economic and political implications.

30. The missions to Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo included the participation of the United Nations resident coordinators and representatives from the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) and ECCAS, as well as the Office

for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and OHCHR in some instances. The delegations held discussions with government officials, members of the diplomatic community, the United Nations country team and members of the refugee communities, among others.

31. In Chad, some 92,000 refugees had been registered since December 2013 and a 28 per cent malnutrition rate along the border with the Central African Republic was reported. Around 80,000 Chadians repatriated from the Central African Republic were living with host families who themselves were already living in precarious conditions.

32. In Cameroon, over 178,000 refugees had been registered by local authorities and UNHCR, 81,000 of them since the events of 5 December 2013 in the Central African Republic, with 4,000 to 5,000 new arrivals weekly. An overwhelming majority of these refugees were women and children in need of immediate life-saving assistance. Refugee areas in the border towns of Garoua Boulai and Bertoua in eastern Cameroon were characterized by poor sanitation facilities, lack of drinking water, high malnutrition rates and the persistent threat of endemic diseases, including cholera. Health and educational institutions in these areas were overstretched. The challenges in resettling refugee populations in their host countries remain enormous and continue to require urgent attention.

33. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo, the majority of the respective 56,000 and 16,000 refugees from the Central African Republic currently live with host families in impoverished areas where their arrival has put pressure on already limited social services and infrastructure.

34. My Special Representative was informed by the authorities of the countries visited and the United Nations agencies present that they were struggling to cope with the large number of refugees. While their interventions had thus far been funded from limited extrabudgetary and emergency resources, the continuing flow of refugees highlighted the growing gap between their response capacity and the rapidly expanding humanitarian needs. In response to those growing humanitarian needs, the United Nations designed an inter-agency Central African Republic Regional Response Plan to assist the Governments concerned.

35. The security consequences of the crisis in the Central African Republic, particularly the prospect of armed groups crossing into neighbouring countries and fuelling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, were also troubling. In Chad, the security situation on the border with the Central African Republic remained tenuous and volatile owing to the increased activity of armed groups based in the Central African Republic. The presence of 252 ex-Séléka child soldiers in the town of Doba was reported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Government of Chad, through its Ministry of Justice, announced its intent to sign a protocol for the release of 46 children associated with ex-Séléka in Koro-Toro who were currently detained in Chad. In that regard, appropriate reintegration programmes are being planned for the 46 children upon their release from detention. The Government of Chad also expressed concern regarding the suspected inflow of significant amounts of weapons that could be used to destabilize the country and the wider subregion in the future.

36. In Cameroon, several armed attacks had been registered in border towns and villages near the Central African Republic. There were fears that the inter-communal

dimension of the conflict in the Central African Republic might incite external armed groups such as the Nigeria-based Boko Haram suspected of having a presence in the Central African Republic to operate in that country. In the Republic of the Congo, an upsurge in armed criminal activity in the urban areas of Brazzaville and Pointe Noire had been noted since the outbreak of the crisis in the Central African Republic.

37. My Special Representative's interlocutors also stressed the economic impact on neighbouring countries of the crisis in the Central African Republic. Owing to insecurity in the Central African Republic, commercial activity with its closest neighbours, such as Cameroon, has significantly decreased, in particular on the Douala-Bangui transit route, cutting off an economic lifeline for the Central African Republic as well as for Cameroonian suppliers and the port of Douala. That situation has also delayed the supply and increased the costs for urgent humanitarian aid to affected populations in the Central African Republic.

B. Preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding

United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

38. UNOCA, in its capacity as the secretariat of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, supported the organization of the thirty-seventh ministerial meeting of the Committee, held from 19 to 23 December 2013, in N'Djamena. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee adopted the N'Djamena Declaration, which expresses serious concern regarding the deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic. Experts reviewed the overall geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa and took stock of ongoing initiatives to address threats from terrorism, maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the illicit wildlife trade and the activities of armed groups. Cameroon announced that it is the fifth country to ratify the Kinshasa Convention regulating small arms and light weapons, joining the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo and Gabon. The Convention is due to enter into force upon ratification by six United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa Member States, and remaining Member States were encouraged to do so. Member States welcomed the initiative of Equatorial Guinea to host the thirty-eighth ministerial meeting in Malabo in the first half of 2014.

Counter-terrorism

39. UNOCA facilitated the visit of a delegation from the Counter-terrorism Committee Executive Directorate from 2 to 5 December 2013 to identify areas of cooperation with the Government of Gabon on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) on counter-terrorism. UNOCA and the delegation discussed with Gabonese authorities and experts the progress achieved to date with regard to the resolutions, notably legislation for the implementation of a counter-terrorism strategy.

40. In partnership with the Counter-terrorism Implementation Task Force of the United Nations Counter-terrorism Centre, UNOCA, in cooperation with the Government of Gabon, organized a workshop from 28 to 30 January 2014 in

Libreville to advance the road map for development of the integrated counter-terrorism and small arms and light weapons control strategy for the Central African subregion. The workshop brought together national focal points from United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa Member States. They endorsed principles and identified requirements for the integrated strategy, specifically with regard to police and intelligence mechanisms. The integrated strategy should allow the concerned States to strengthen a range of institutions in line with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, while fulfilling relevant obligations set out in Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2004) and 1963 (2010).

41. UNOCA, in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, convened the second in a series of capacity-building workshops on customs, immigration, border control and small arms and light weapons from 22 to 24 April 2014, in Bujumbura. Participants made progress in the development of a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

Human rights and peacebuilding

42. Further to Security Council resolution 1738 (2006), which is aimed at protecting journalists in situations of armed conflict and urges respect for their rights and professional independence, UNOCA and the OHCHR Central Africa Regional Office co-organized a capacity-building workshop for journalists in the subregion from 26 to 28 November 2013, in Douala, Cameroon. The workshop, which was opened by the Cameroonian Minister of Communication, provided training on journalistic ethics and standards. Participants adopted a Declaration on media, peace and human rights in Central Africa and established a subregional forum to facilitate the role of the media in the promotion of democratic values, human rights and peacebuilding. UNOCA and OHCHR continue to provide support for the implementation of these activities.

43. On 11 March 2014, my Special Representative met with the President of the Confederation of African Football, in Yaoundé, to reinvigorate joint actions in line with the framework of cooperation signed in November 2012 and to discuss ways of enhancing their partnership in the context of utilizing football as a means to promote peace and security in Central Africa.

Piracy and armed robbery at sea committed off the coast of the States of the Gulf of Guinea

44. On 31 January, the twenty-second ordinary session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Addis Ababa, adopted the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy. In line with Security Council resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012) and further to the decisions taken at the Yaoundé summit of June 2013, UNOCA, in close collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa, actively supported ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Gulf of Guinea Commission, the African Union and the Government of Cameroon to convene the first meeting of the Interregional Working Group, held between 22 and 26 April in Yaoundé. At the meeting, experts developed a 2014-2016 action plan and a June-December 2014 road map for operationalizing the Interregional Coordination Centre, with a target of

June 2014 for initial operating capability. Communication and resource mobilization strategies were also developed at the meeting. The second meeting of the Interregional Working Group will be held between 10 and 15 May in Yaoundé to finalize these documents with a view to their adoption in June 2014. UNOCA continues to participate in an informal experts group, the Group of Eight Plus Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, which supports Member States and regional organizations to tackle challenges of maritime insecurity.

IV. Lord's Resistance Army

A. Current situation

45. The Lord's Resistance Army is currently believed to have split into several highly mobile groups operating with a significant degree of autonomy in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They are involved primarily in survival mode activities that entail attacking civilians, killing, looting and kidnapping. There have been no reports of recent premeditated mass killings or other grave human rights abuses. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 65 presumed attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army were reported during the first quarter of 2014 in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, resulting in 93 abductions and two deaths. The number of reported deaths decreased significantly compared with the first quarters of 2012 and 2013 respectively, while the number of abductions, although still high, declined compared with the fourth quarter of 2013.

46. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also reported that the number of persons displaced in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan decreased from 326,448 persons as at 31 December 2013 to 159,927 persons as at 31 March 2014. The reduction is due largely to the increased number of returnees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo thanks to security following operations against Lord's Resistance Army bases in Garamba National Park in September 2013 by the Regional Task Force of the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army. As a result, communities surrounding the National Park have enjoyed a level of security unprecedented since early 2008, with only nine attacks reported in the last six months, according to partners on the ground. Overall, the Central African Republic hosts 21,000 internally displaced persons and 3,225 refugees, the Democratic Republic of the Congo hosts 113,154 internally displaced persons and 6,574 refugees and South Sudan hosts 15,974 refugees in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas.

47. In the Central African Republic, while international attention has largely focused on the sectarian violence further west, Lord's Resistance Army forces have continued to target communities in the eastern part of the country. During the first quarter of 2014, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded 24 attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army and 45 abductions occurring mostly in the prefecture of Haut Mbomou, representing a significant upward trend in Lord's Resistance Army activity. Increased attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army were also reported in the prefectures of Mbomou and Haut Kotto. In addition, multiple

allegations of continuous recruitment and association of children in the Mbomou, Haut Mbomou and Haute Kotto prefectures by the Lord's Resistance Army were reported. However, the allegations could not be substantiated because of insecurity and inaccessibility in those areas.

48. Senior Lord's Resistance Army leaders are believed to be based in the north-eastern part of the Central African Republic, exploiting the country's current internal instability to regroup. It is also suspected that some ex-Séléka combatants and some community leaders may be in collusion with the Lord's Resistance Army and may be providing the group with information about Regional Task Force operations and supplies, including arms and ammunition.

49. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported 41 presumed attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army, two deaths and 48 abductions during the first quarter of 2014. The number of attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army declined by 21 per cent compared with the preceding quarter, with related deaths and abductions decreasing by 86 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively. Overall, attacks, killings and abductions declined dramatically over the past six months, including in their intensity and violence. However, spikes in Lord's Resistance Army activity in February and March 2014 reflect a westward shift of their activity from the Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé districts towards the towns of Niangara and Bangadi. During the months of January to March alone, 10 children were abducted by elements of the Lord's Resistance Army in Haut-Uélé (7) and Bas-Uélé (3) in Orientale Province. The youngest child was four years old and the eldest was 17.

50. In South Sudan, no Lord's Resistance Army incidents were reported during the period under review. Despite reports of Lord's Resistance Army activity in November 2013, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) reported that the last serious attack is still considered to have taken place in June 2011.

51. While cooperation among the countries that participate in the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army and military support from the United States of America have allowed the Regional Task Force to expand its operations, instability in the Central African Republic and South Sudan is undermining progress achieved thus far. In the Central African Republic, the lack of national security forces, including intelligence-sharing capacity, as well as growing inter-communal conflict and, in some cases, hostility to foreign Regional Task Force troops present challenges to counter-Lord's Resistance Army operations. The redeployment of Ugandan and South Sudanese Regional Task Force contingents away from Lord's Resistance Army operations has created potential security vulnerabilities in Western Equatoria State that could be exploited by the Lord's Resistance Army. Armed Janjaweed militias and pastoralists, who move throughout southern Darfur to the Central African Republic, are an additional source of insecurity as these groups occasionally clash with the Regional Task Force and are suspected of providing information to the Lord's Resistance Army regarding Regional Task Force troop movement.

52. The Government of the Sudan indicates that there are no Lord's Resistance Army elements in the disputed Kafia Kingi enclave, on the border between the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Sudan. However, credible sources suggest that Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony and senior Lord's

Resistance Army commanders have recently returned to seek safe haven in Sudanese-controlled areas of the enclave.

B. Coordination and resource mobilization

53. On 12 February in Kampala, a UNOCA-African Union joint delegation, led by the African Union Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army Issue, Francisco Madeira, met with the Ugandan Minister of Defence. The Minister reaffirmed his country's strong political commitment to the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, proposed to review its progress during the next meeting of the Joint Coordinating Mechanism and pledged to redeploy Uganda People's Defence Forces troops from South Sudan back to the Regional Task Force once the situation in that country stabilized.

54. My Special Representative and the African Union Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army Issue co-chaired the biannual meeting of Lord's Resistance Army focal points on 13 and 14 February in Entebbe, Uganda. Institutions from the four Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries were represented, including relevant United Nations missions and agencies, non-governmental organizations and donors. Participants took note of collective achievements in implementing the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army. UNOCA and the African Union continued to ensure that the commitment of the Governments of Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries to the United Nations regional strategy and to the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army was sustained. On the military front, the Regional Task Force continued to exert military pressure on the Lord's Resistance Army. With regard to the civilian dimension, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations undertook numerous initiatives to enhance the protection of civilians, child protection and humanitarian assistance; expand disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration activities; and support peacebuilding, human rights, rule of law and development. Participants also reflected on several long-term development issues in anticipation of an upcoming African Union consultative workshop to identify the way forward on long-term stabilization in Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries. The workshop will build on a preliminary assessment conducted by the World Bank.

55. During the meeting, UNOCA facilitated the development of a series of recommendations to advance progress in the five strategic areas of the United Nations regional strategy. UNOCA has also improved coordination among all entities involved and, in that context, recommendations were elaborated to further enhance information-sharing among global, country-specific and thematic United Nations entities, between United Nations and non-United Nations entities, and among security actors such as the Regional Task Force, UNMISS, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), MISCA/United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and troop-contributing countries.

56. My Special Representative attended the fourth ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordinating Mechanism of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army on 25 March 2014 in Addis Ababa. The four

participating countries renewed their commitment to Regional Task Force operations, with South Sudan and Uganda pledging to return the troops they had withdrawn from the Regional Task Force once the political situation in South Sudan permits. The countries endorsed the proposed restructuring at Regional Task Force headquarters, decided to reconvene quarterly Joint Coordinating Mechanism meetings to reinvigorate the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army and requested the African Union to deploy a technical assessment mission to the Central African Republic for the development of modalities of coordination between the Regional Task Force and MISCA. My Special Representative reiterated the Security Council's recommendation, in its presidential statement of 19 December 2012 (S/PRST/2012/28), for the convening of a high-level meeting of Lord's Resistance Army-affected States to further consolidate political cooperation, which was endorsed by the Joint Coordinating Mechanism.

57. The European Union and the United States continue to provide critical support to the functioning of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army. In March, the European Union released 1.9 million euros to support the Regional Task Force and the Office of the African Union Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army Issue, while the United States increased its support to the Regional Task Force with the provision of specialized military aircraft and personnel to facilitate the rapid transport of troops. However, many projects in the implementation plan of the United Nations regional strategy remain under-resourced.

C. Implementation of the United Nations regional strategy

1. Operationalization and full implementation of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army

58. The operations of the Regional Task Force continue to make a difference in the fight against the Lord's Resistance Army, although recent setbacks threaten to undermine the full operationalization of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army and the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy. Of the 5,030 troops originally pledged to the Regional Task Force by participating Regional Cooperation Initiative countries, 3,380 troops have been contributed. Its current standing capacity is 2,147 troops owing to the temporary redeployment of Ugandan and South Sudanese contingents by their respective Governments to respond to the internal crisis in South Sudan. The Democratic Republic of the Congo contingent remains active albeit underequipped, while only 60 of the pledged 150 members of the contingent have been deployed (55 in Obo, Central African Republic and 5 in Yambo, South Sudan). Meanwhile, MONUSCO forces continued to provide support to military operations carried out by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo.

59. Although communication is now established between the Regional Task Force headquarters and African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, the full operationalization of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army is dependent on mobilizing the resources and equipment required to establish reliable communications between Regional Task Force headquarters and the three sectors concerned. Resources are also required to further

support the functioning office of the African Union Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army Issue and to address existing logistical gaps.

2. Enhancement of efforts to promote the protection of civilians

60. United Nations missions and agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations are actively engaged in efforts to promote the protection of civilians in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas. UNICEF continued to provide ongoing training for Regional Task Force officers on child protection and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and supported cross-border sharing of lessons learned on protection and reintegration and strengthening of intergovernmental links in Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries. In that regard, a workshop organized by a non-governmental organization was held in Kampala in January 2014 to examine current practice, challenges and priorities in the area of protection and reintegration in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas.

61. In the Central African Republic, increasing Lord's Resistance Army activity in Séléka-controlled Mbomou and Haut Kotto prefectures, where there is a minimal presence of humanitarian actors, has exposed communities in those areas to greater risk of attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army. However, UNICEF continued its protection-related interventions by providing assistance, through a non-governmental organization on the ground, to enhance the resilience of Lord's Resistance Army-affected communities, including interim care and family tracing and reunification activities for unaccompanied and separated children, as well as the promotion of early child development activities, vocational training programmes and support for income-generating activities. Through its partners, the agency also renewed its programme to provide reintegration and psychosocial support to children and other victims of attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army in the country. The United States Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded communication networks to enhance community-based protection.

62. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, efforts by MONUSCO included establishing mobile operating bases in vulnerable areas jointly with the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, installing mobile operating bases in Nambia, conducting patrols to reassure civilian populations, constructing bridges along the Dungu-Faradje road, training community alert network focal points and designing a local community protection plan. Under a USAID-funded public-private partnership with Vodacom Congo, cellphone towers are now operational in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas. Non-governmental organizations on the ground are currently running protection committees in eight vulnerable villages of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

3. Expansion of current disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration activities to cover all Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas

63. Collective efforts by counter-Lord's Resistance Army regional military forces, United States military advisers, non-governmental organizations and local partners continue to encourage defections. It is reported that 37 members of the Lord's Resistance Army who had been with the group for six months or longer have defected since December 2013, including 11 Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army combatants. These figures include 19 Lord's Resistance Army combatants who

defected in Zemio, Central African Republic in December 2013 — the largest single Lord's Resistance Army defection since 2008.

64. Efforts by MONUSCO included community sensitization and the organizing of workshops in Dungu, Niangara and Faradje to establish safe assembly points. The Mission and its partners conducted aerial messaging and recorded video messages to encourage defections, while continuing to participate in exchange visits between actors in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas.

65. The United States military advisers expanded efforts to promote defections through leaflet drops, radio broadcasts, aerial loudspeakers and the establishment of safe reporting sites. More than 1 million leaflets encouraging defections at 17 locations across Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries have been dropped.

66. UNICEF continued to work with the Regional Task Force, United Nations missions and civil society to support the return and reintegration of children throughout the region. In cooperation with UNICEF and South Sudanese local authorities, a non-governmental organization involved on the ground plans to convene a meeting of local leaders to map needs, identify gaps and develop common approaches for the reintegration of returnees as well as the annual meeting of the Regional Civil Society Task Force. The Task Force will bring together community leaders and representatives from Lord's Resistance Army-affected communities across the subregion. Both meetings are scheduled to take place in May 2014. In addition, UNICEF supported the rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by the Lord's Resistance Army, including former abducted children.

4. Promotion of a coordinated humanitarian and child protection response in all Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas

67. The humanitarian situation in many Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries remains precarious. Non-governmental organizations are present only in some Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas of the Central African Republic, given the limited access, while they continue to phase out from non-emergency areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo despite outstanding humanitarian needs. Despite such challenges, several actors remain actively engaged.

68. UNICEF and partners developed training materials and conducted training for over 300 Regional Task Force officers on child protection and prevention of sexual violence, who, in turn, provided training to subordinates. In March 2014, UNICEF documented the need to extend protection and humanitarian assistance to Lord's Resistance Army-affected populations in south-eastern Central African Republic and is currently working to deploy child protection staff in that country. In cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and United Nations missions, UNICEF continues to monitor and report on child rights violations in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas and to support interim care, family tracing and reunification services for children who escape the Lord's Resistance Army.

5. Provision of support to Lord's Resistance Army-affected Governments in the fields of peacebuilding, human rights, rule of law and development to enable them to establish State authority across their territory

69. In Uganda, development interventions for northern Uganda have been mainstreamed into the National Development Plan. OHCHR, meanwhile, has provided technical advice to Ugandan national institutions in a range of Lord's Resistance Army-related areas, including in the development of a draft national transitional justice policy framework and on the rules of procedure and evidence to facilitate prosecution of those implicated for serious crimes and gross violations of human rights during the Lord's Resistance Army conflict. OHCHR is also supporting the Uganda Human Rights Commission, as part of the Uganda Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict, to fulfil its protection mandate by documenting serious crimes and gross violations of human rights committed during the Lord's Resistance Army conflict in northern Uganda.

70. In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA will continue to hold meetings of its Lord's Resistance Army Inter-Agency Task Force. The new transitional authorities have appointed focal points for Lord's Resistance Army issues at the strategic and working levels and have committed to take part in the Mission's Inter-Agency Task Force meetings. The Mission has also advocated for the new transitional authorities to revisit the development of a national Lord's Resistance Army strategy and offered its technical support in that regard.

71. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO supported a range of activities to facilitate the establishment of State authority in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas. The Mission funded the construction of the tribunal de paix in Dungu and facilitated the deployment of its three judges. It provided assistance to the military court for conducting mobile court sessions and facilitated improved prison conditions. The reopening of police stations was supported, including the Doruma substation, which became operational during the current reporting period. Successful MONUSCO advocacy for the deployment of policemen in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas has allowed the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo to focus counter-Lord's Resistance Army military operations. Capacity-building workshops were also organized for local authorities in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas.

V. Observations and recommendations

72. I reiterate my appreciation to Central African States and institutions for their important and valuable role in addressing the ongoing crisis in the Central African Republic, in collaboration with the African Union. ECCAS and CEMAC have shown unwavering commitment to finding a solution to the crisis in the interest of fostering peace and greater stability in the subregion.

73. I commend the efforts of the Governments of the subregion, United Nations entities, national and international non-governmental organizations and other partners in addressing the consequences posed by the crisis in the Central African Republic on neighbouring countries. In that regard, I call upon the international community to urgently provide the requisite financial support to the inter-agency

Central African Republic Regional Response Plan to assist the concerned Governments to address their grow ng humanitarian needs.

74. I am deeply concerned about the impact of fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram, which has now resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of Nigerian refugees and returning immigrants to northern Cameroon and Chad. I am further concerned about the activities of Boko Haram in some States in the subregion, including kidnappings and deadly bomb attacks. I welcome ongoing efforts to strengthen border cooperation and encourage countries concerned in Central Africa to work in concert with Nigeria to urgently bring to an end the violent activities of armed and extremist groups which continue to threaten regional peace and stability. I also welcome the commitment of Governments in the region to make headway on the road map for development of the integrated counter-terrorism and small arms and light weapons control strategy for the Central African subregion. UNOCA will continue to support those efforts in collaboration with the relevant United Nations entities involved.

75. The financial losses to the economies of Central African Member States caused by piracy and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea are massive. I commend the important strides made to strengthen sustainable maritime governance in West and Central Africa and welcome the formal adoption of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy by the twenty-second ordinary session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government. I also welcome the development of a road map as well as an action plan towards the establishment and operationalization of the Interregional Coordination Centre and call upon States and subregional organizations of the Gulf of Guinea to pursue their efforts in the implementation of the decisions of the Yaoundé summit. UNOCA will continue to assist the region and to mobilize support in order to achieve that goal.

76. I welcome the initiatives of the Heads of State, Central African Governments and ECCAS to tackle the issue of illicit wildlife trade. I remain concerned about the links between illicit wildlife trade and armed groups in the subregion, including the Lord's Resistance Army. UNOCA will continue to support the subregion to identify collaborative approaches to address this issue.

77. While noting the concerns of some States regarding the free movement of persons and goods, I encourage CEMAC to continue to work with UNOCA towards the objective of greater political and economic integration for Central African States as a means of catalysing greater regional development.

78. I welcome the continued progress made against the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army and acknowledge the fruitful cooperation between UNOCA and the African Union in that regard, as well as the contributions from Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and donors. I recognize, in particular, the critical support provided by the United States and the European Union.

79. Until the transfer of authority from MISCA to MINUSCA on 15 September 2014, I urge greater coordination between MISCA and the African Union Regional Task Force. In that context, I welcome the decision of the fourth ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordinating Mechanism requesting the African Union Commission to deploy a technical assessment mission to elaborate the modalities for coordination

between the two African Union forces and to hold a summit of Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries.

80. Despite the continuing decline in Lord's Resistance Army activity overall, the Lord's Resistance Army still remains a serious threat, with its senior leadership intact and with the potential to destabilize the subregion. Furthermore, instability in the Central African Republic and South Sudan is seriously undermining progress thus far achieved. I call upon the participating Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army countries to fulfil their troop commitments to the Regional Task Force.

81. I wish to reiterate that the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army provides a comprehensive approach to address a range of pressing needs in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas and call upon the international community to provide financial support for the activities detailed in the implementation plan adopted by the Security Council in December 2012. Given the minimal presence of humanitarian actors in many Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas, I draw particular attention to the need for donors to support early recovery activities in order to restore basic livelihoods and essential services for affected communities in those areas.

82. I would like, once again, to express my appreciation to the Governments of Central African countries, ECCAS, CEMAC, the African Union, the Gulf of Guinea Commission, the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and other subregional and regional institutions for their continued collaboration with UNOCA. I thank the various entities of the United Nations system working in Central Africa, including the heads of United Nations peace operations, regional offices, country teams and other relevant entities, for their support and cooperation with UNOCA. Finally, I would like to reiterate my appreciation to my Special Representative, Abou Moussa, and the staff of UNOCA for their continuing efforts to advance the cause of peace and security in Central Africa.